



Provincial Health Services Authority

**For the Patient: Pralatrexate**  
Other names: FOLOTYN®

- **Pralatrexate** (pral a trex' ate) is a drug that is used to treat some types of cancer. It is a clear liquid that is injected into a vein.
- Tell your doctor if you have ever had an unusual or **allergic reaction** to pralatrexate before receiving pralatrexate.
- A **blood test** may be taken before each treatment. The dose and timing of your treatment may be changed based on the test results and/or other side effects.
- Other drugs may **interact** with pralatrexate. Check with your doctor or pharmacist before you start or stop taking any other drugs.
- The **drinking of alcohol** (in small amounts) does not appear to affect the safety or usefulness of pralatrexate.
- Pralatrexate may affect **fertility** in men and women. If you plan to have children, discuss this with your doctor before being treated with pralatrexate.
- Pralatrexate may damage sperm and may harm the baby if used during pregnancy. For women of childbearing potential, it is best to use **birth control** throughout treatment with pralatrexate and for eight weeks after the last dose. Men being treated with pralatrexate should use a condom (even after vasectomy) during sexual contact with a woman of childbearing potential. Tell your doctor right away if you or your partner becomes pregnant. Do not breastfeed during treatment.
- **Tell** doctors, dentists, and other health professionals that you are being treated with pralatrexate before you receive any treatment from them.
- You will be given a **vitamin B<sub>12</sub> injection** up to 10 weeks before your first treatment, and then every 8 to 10 weeks until after your last treatment. This will help decrease your chance of developing side effects from pralatrexate.
- You need to take a **folic acid supplement** every day to decrease your chance of developing side effects from pralatrexate. Ask your community pharmacist for help choosing a supplement that contains 1000 - 1250 mcg of folic acid. Start taking it 10 days before your first treatment and keep taking it every day until 30 days after your last treatment. If you miss a dose of folic acid, take it as soon as you can if it is within 12 hours of the missed dose. If it is over 12 hours since your missed dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your usual dosing times.

Changes in blood counts

Pralatrexate may cause temporary changes in your blood counts. Your doctor will be following these changes carefully by performing blood tests. Adjustment of your treatment may be needed in certain circumstances.

BLOOD COUNTS	MANAGEMENT
<p>Normal white blood cells protect your body by fighting bacteria (germs) that cause infection. <b>When they are low, you are at greater risk of having an infection.</b></p>	<p>To help prevent infection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wash your hands often and always after using the bathroom.</li> <li>• Avoid crowds and people who are sick.</li> <li>• Call your doctor <b>immediately</b> at the first sign of an infection such as fever (over 100°F or 38°C by an oral thermometer), chills, cough, or burning when you pass urine.</li> </ul>
<p>Normal platelets help your blood to clot normally after an injury (e.g., cut). <b>When the platelet count is low, you may be more likely to bruise or bleed.</b></p>	<p>To help prevent bleeding problems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try not to bruise, cut, or burn yourself.</li> <li>• Clean your nose by blowing gently. Do not pick your nose.</li> <li>• Avoid constipation.</li> <li>• Brush your teeth gently with a soft toothbrush as your gums may bleed more easily.</li> </ul> <p>Some medications such as ASA (e.g., ASPIRIN®) or ibuprofen (e.g., ADVIL®) may increase your risk of bleeding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not stop taking any medication that has been prescribed by your doctor (e.g., <b>ASA for your heart</b>).</li> <li>• For minor pain, try acetaminophen (e.g., TYLENOL®).</li> </ul>

Side effects are listed in the following table in the order in which they may occur. Tips to help manage the side effects are included.

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
<p><b>Pain or tenderness</b> may occur where the needle was placed.</p>	<p>Apply cool compresses or soak in cool water for 15-20 minutes several times a day.</p>
<p><b>Skin rashes</b> may sometimes occur.</p>	<p>If itching is very irritating, call your doctor. Otherwise, be sure to mention it at your next visit.</p>

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
<p><b>Nausea</b> and <b>vomiting</b> may occur after your treatment. Most people have little or no nausea.</p>	<p>You may be given a prescription for antinausea drug(s) to take before your treatment and/or at home. <b>It is easier to prevent nausea than treat it once it has occurred</b>, so follow directions closely.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drink plenty of fluids.</li> <li>• Eat and drink often in small amounts.</li> </ul> <p>Try the ideas in <i>Practical Tips to Manage Nausea</i>.*</p>
<p><b>Fever</b> may sometimes occur shortly after treatment with pralatrexate. Fever should last no longer than 24 hours.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take acetaminophen (e.g., TYLENOL®) every 4-6 hours, to a maximum of 4 g (4000 mg) per day.</li> <li>• Fever (over 100°F or 38°C by an oral thermometer) which occurs more than a few days after treatment may be a sign of an infection. Report this to your doctor <b>immediately</b>.</li> </ul>
<p>Minor bleeding, such as <b>nosebleeds</b>, may sometimes occur.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sit up straight and tip your head slightly forward. Tilting your head back may cause blood to run down your throat.</li> <li>• Pinch your nostrils shut between your thumb and forefinger or apply firm pressure against the bleeding nostril for 10 full minutes.</li> <li>• After 10 minutes, check to see if your nose is still bleeding. If it is, hold it for 10 more minutes.</li> <li>• Stay quiet for a few hours and do not blow your nose for at least 12 hours after the bleeding has stopped.</li> <li>• Get emergency help if a nosebleed lasts longer than 20 minutes.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Diarrhea</b> may sometimes occur.</p>	<p>If diarrhea is a problem:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drink plenty of fluids.</li> <li>• Eat and drink often in small amounts.</li> <li>• Avoid high fibre foods as outlined in <i>Food Choices to Help Manage Diarrhea</i>.* </li></ul>

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
<b>Constipation</b> may sometimes occur.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exercise if you can.</li> <li>• Drink plenty of fluids.</li> <li>• Try ideas in <i>Food Choices to Manage Constipation</i>.*</li> </ul>
<b>Sore mouth</b> commonly occurs a few days after treatment. Mouth sores can occur on the tongue, the sides of the mouth, or in the throat. <b>Mouth sores or bleeding gums can lead to an infection.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brush your teeth gently after eating and at bedtime with a very soft toothbrush. If your gums bleed, use gauze instead of a brush. Use baking soda instead of toothpaste.</li> <li>• Make a mouthwash with ¼ teaspoon baking soda AND ¼ teaspoon salt in 1 cup warm water and rinse several times a day.</li> <li>• Try the ideas in <i>Food Ideas to Try with a Sore Mouth</i>.*</li> </ul>
<b>Muscle or joint pain</b> may sometimes occur.	You may take acetaminophen (e.g., TYLENOL®) every 4-6 hours to a maximum of 4 g (4000 mg) per day for mild to moderate pain. Tell your doctor if the pain interferes with your activity.
<b>Swelling</b> of hands, feet, or lower legs may sometimes occur if your body retains extra fluid.	If swelling is a problem: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elevate your feet when sitting.</li> <li>• Avoid tight clothing.</li> </ul>
<b>Loss of appetite</b> and <b>weight loss</b> sometimes occur.	Try the ideas in <i>Food Ideas to Help with Decreased Appetite</i> .*
<b>Tiredness</b> and lack of energy may sometimes occur.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not drive a car or operate machinery if you are feeling tired.</li> <li>• Try the ideas in <i>Fatigue/Tiredness – Patient Handout</i> or <i>Your Bank to Energy Savings: Helping People with Cancer Handle Fatigue</i>.*</li> </ul>
<b>Hair loss</b> is rare with pralatrexate. If you lose hair, it will grow back once you stop treatment with pralatrexate. Colour and texture may change.	If hair loss is a problem, refer to <i>Resources for Hair Loss and Appearance Changes – Patient Handout</i> .*

**\*Please ask your chemotherapy nurse or pharmacist for a copy.**

